

Abstract

The passing of the Fisheries Reform Act in 1997 by the North Carolina General Assembly mandated that the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) develop management plans for all of the state's commercially significant marine fisheries species. In order to develop adequate state fishery management plans, biological, social, and economic data must be utilized. The goal of this study is to determine the economic characteristics of North Carolina's state-managed commercial fisheries in addition to providing baseline economic data that will be useful in the development of future state-level fishery management plans. Landings of North Carolina's commercial fisheries have varied widely from 1972 to 2002 due to many factors including natural variations in fisheries stocks, weather events, management strategies, changes in effort, and changes in the socioeconomics of individual fisheries. The most economically important state-managed species in North Carolina were hard blue crabs, shrimp, and southern flounder, and the most economically important gear types were pots, trawls, and gill nets. Regulations that pertain to these particular species and gears could have a large impact on North Carolina's fishing community and economy.